

# Gulfport at a GLANCE



The City of Gulfport, Mississippi

July/August 2008

Dear City of Gulfport Staff,

I have just come from the funeral of Lieutenant **Robert J. "Rob" Curry** of the Gulfport Police Department, who was killed in the line of duty August 14. Lt. Curry served our community with dedication and pride for 14 years. His tragic death has truly brought a community together to mourn and left a city family grieving for the loss of one of our own. He showed us all how to make our community a better, safer place to live and how to care for those around us. The outpouring of support throughout the city and other cities and counties throughout our state and country have reminded me of how powerful and compassionate our network of public servants and public safety truly is. I know I speak for all of you as I offer my condolences to his family, friends and fellow Gulfport Police Officers.

I can't help but look ahead at the upcoming 3rd anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and stand in amazement of the tremendous progress we have made together. **There's no finer staff in our state than the staff we have on board at the City of Gulfport.** Each time I speak to groups around the country about our city and our recovery, they ask me to identify the one thing each city needs when disaster strikes – I tell them all without hesitation that they need a group of employees just like we have in the city able to persevere and stand tall through any storm. **I stand in awe of each of you and am thankful for the privilege of working alongside you each and every day.**

I am happy to say that city buildings are being repaired and rebuilt on a constant and continuous basis. By the end of this month, the Jones Building will be completed. Many of you will be back in the quality office space that you deserve. The Hardy Building is underway and we should be moving those departments to permanent office space by November.

I am also happy to report that our fire stations have undergone major repairs and renovations with five stations completed and three more currently under repair with completion expected next month. Pre-bids on our new Fire Station #7 will take place at the end of August and will be completed in the latter part of 2009. Construction will begin on our Municipal Building for our Police and Municipal Court by year's end or early January, and will prove to be the finest facility of its type in the country. And finally, our community centers are reopening to the public and our parks are enabling families to spend quality time together in tranquil surroundings. **This truly is the year of "bricks and mortar."**

I want to personally thank each of you for the support you have given to the administration and our residents. Many of you continue to put your personal lives on hold to help those in our city needing our assistance. You exemplify the true spirit of public service. **You continue to be the greatest and most courageous "heroes of the hurricane."**



God Bless,

**Brent Warr**  
August 18, 2008

## BENEFITS & WELLNESS



### SEPTEMBER IS PROSTATE AWARENESS MONTH

Most cases of prostate cancer occur in men older than 50 and more than 70 percent are in men over 65. For reasons that are still unknown, African American men are more likely than white men to develop prostate cancer and are more than twice as likely to die from it. Having one or more close relatives with prostate cancer also increases a man's risk of developing this disease. So does eating a diet high in animal fat. Our Wellness Clinic can perform a prostate exam for male employees. The exam is free. Schedule your appointment by calling (228) 248-0031.

Since opening its doors January 2, 2008, our Employee Wellness Clinic has been successfully treating employees and their dependents – and saving the city a great deal of money!

The Wellness Clinic offers a full range of diagnostic and treatment services, including such essential tests as prostate exams, colon cancer testing, pap smears and electrocardiograms. The Clinic's calendar and more information can be found on the HR web page.

**Wellness Clinic Facts** - Since opening January 2:

- Over 2,300 visits • The Clinic averages 234 employee visits monthly
- An average of 152 dependents visit monthly • Nearly 1,300 lab tests have been run

### SAVE FOR YOUR FUTURE

Have you figured out much you'll have saved for retirement? Will it be enough? A good rule of thumb is to save enough money to ensure you live the way you've always lived. You can't expect to spend less on living expenses when retired than you do today. Most financial advisors agree that you'll need 70 percent or more of your pre-retirement income to maintain your lifestyle in retirement. With proper planning, you can meet this goal.

While participation in PERS is required for all employees who work more than 20 hours in a week, you may want to save more for your retirement. The bi-weekly PERS payroll deduction of 7.85 percent is fixed, but you can use Deferred Comp to save more.

What is Deferred Comp?

The Mississippi Deferred Compensation Plan & Trust (MDCPT), offered through the Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), is a supplemental retirement savings plan offered by the state.

Deferred Comp is a section 457 plan (similar to a 401k) allowing you to defer compen-

sation on a pre-tax basis through payroll deduction. Deferred Comp allows you to contribute these pre-tax funds to investment choices that suit your savings goals.

Major differences between PERS & Deferred Comp. Unlike the required PERS contributions, you can increase, decrease, stop, or re-start Deferred Comp contributions at any time. You can access PERS funds only after retiring or leaving employment. However, you may access Deferred Comp savings for unforeseen emergency situations or in small amount distributions. Finally, there is no early withdrawal penalty for Deferred Comp.

Saving in Deferred Comp pays! You can save as little as \$25 per month, which could add up to \$30,000 or more over 30 years. Remember: it's never too late to start saving! Deferred Comp even has a catch-up option that allows some employees to save more than the regular annual maximum.

Signing up is easy. Go to [www.pers.state.ms.us](http://www.pers.state.ms.us) and click on Deferred Comp or contact PERS-Deferred Compensation at 1-800-846-4551 or 601-364-9350.

### TUITION REIMBURSEMENT REMINDER

The City of Gulfport is committed to helping employees continue their education and develop in their professional careers. In keeping with this philosophy, the City offers an Educational Assistance Program to reimburse tuition, books & fees incurred through approved accredited colleges or universities.

Contact Lauren Germany in the Human Resources Department at x5831 with any questions.

Additional information is available on the Human Resources website: click on the City's website and choose the Human Resources link on the left-hand navigation bar.

*\* Registration forms and information about MGCCC & USM are available in the Human Resources office.*

## IN MEMORIAM



Rob began his career with the Gulfport Police Department in 1994 after serving in the United States Air Force. He also briefly served with the Harrison County Sheriff's Office before returning home to the Gulfport Police Department. Rob was not only a veteran police officer but a career police officer who served with a passion for every aspect of the job. This passion was an inspiration to those who served with him, especially those whom he supervised.

While Officer in Charge of the Traffic Division, Rob was working on several projects to increase the efficiency of traffic enforcement. Along with many others he was also instrumental in developing annual goals for his division to accomplish during the 2008 – 2009 fiscal year that would improve the overall safety of traffic in the City of Gulfport. Rob achieved many things during his career. He was the current President of Sobriety Trained Officers Representing Mississippi (STORM), an accomplished hostage negotiator and a Master D.U.I. Instructor. He served as a D.U.I. Officer for the Department for many years, making the roadways safe from the dangers of those driving while intoxicated. But most importantly, he was a husband and father whom his family could be proud of.

Tragedies occur on a daily basis and as police officers we frequently deal with them as part of our job. However, few of us are prepared to deal with tragedies when they happen close to home. There are few employees or community members in the City of Gulfport who have not felt the tidal wave of heartbreak at the recent loss of Lieutenant Rob Curry. As a police officer, father and man, he set a standard to which all who knew him aspired. After his 14 years of service, there are few police officers who cannot say that Rob did not inspire or influence them in some way. There is not enough room in any newsletter or newspaper to even begin telling stories about Rob or his influence on everyone he ever came into contact with. The multitude of reflections left on the Officer Down Memorial Page are a poignant tribute to his life and influence. No heart could be left untouched after reading those reflections from family, friends and complete strangers from across the United States and Canada.

As Chief Alan Weatherford said, "Rob's death is a tremendous loss to our police family. He has always embodied that which makes law enforcement an admirable job. There has never been a question as to his love of the job and the love of his fellow officers. A good law enforcement officer honors a community by his service. The safety of his City was Rob Curry's goal. We can honor his memory by making it our own." Donations to assist the family can be made to "The Robert J. Curry Memorial Fund" at any Hancock Bank location.

**Rest in peace brother, we'll stand your watch from here.**



## NEW CIVIL SERVICES COMMISSIONER APPOINTED



*Cathye Ross-Amos*

Welcome to Cathye Ross-Amos, new Civil Service Commissioner and the first female to serve on the commission! She was appointed at the June 17 council meeting and took the oath of office for Ward 6 on July 14.

Ross-Amos graduated from USM with a BS in Business Administration. Her post-graduate work was done at Millsaps College and the University of Nevada. She was recognized as one of Mississippi's 50 Leading Business Women in 2003 and is the owner of Ross Business Partnerships, a consulting firm specializing in management and marketing. She is married to Rick Amos, a local attorney.



## LEISURE SERVICES FUN

*From the Desk of Larry Davis, Hershey Track & Field Games State Director & Athletic Coordinator of Gulfport Department of Leisure Services*

Six athletes from our state traveled to the 31st Annual Hershey North American Track & Field Final held August 3 in Hershey, PA. A total of 560 youth athletes attended.

The day after arriving, each athlete toured the Hershey Chocolate Factory and enjoyed Hershey Park Amusement Complex. They also met Olympic legends Carl Lewis, Bruce Jenner and Rafer Johnson and watched exhibition races.

As always, our local athletes made us proud! Lindsay Raybourn of Long Beach placed 6th in the 11-12 girls' 800 Meter Run with a time of 2:34.04 and Diaz Easterling of Gulfport placed 6th in the 13-14 boys' 100 Meter Dash with a time of 12.68. Richaud Floyd of Gulfport placed 4th in the 9-10 boys' 50 Meter Dash in 8.12 seconds and Jaya Allen of Gulfport placed 7th in the 11-12 girls' 100 meter Dash in 14.9 seconds. Andre Davis of Gulfport placed 12th in the 13-14 boys' Softball Throw with a distance of 135.08.

I would like to thank all the volunteers at the local level who made the 2008 program a huge success. A special thank you goes to the support of all MRPA members. I hope to see all MRPA agencies represented in the 2009 event!

If you are interested in starting this program in your community, please contact me at (228) 831-0153.



[From left: Jylin Whitlock of Jackson, Julina Johnson of Pascagoula, Ty Horne of Hattiesburg, Lindsey Raybourn of Long Beach, Tanisha Winder of Jackson and Diaz Easterling of Gulfport]

# MAINTENANCE & PUBLIC WORKS: Working For Us All

## GOOD NEWS FROM "THE SHOP"

For the first time in a long time, the "Shop" is completely staffed! The Floor Technicians assigned to the shop handle everything from breakdown repairs to normal preventative maintenance services. The Public Works Maintenance Shop provides a full range of services on over 485 pieces of equipment. The Department has requisitioned and received over one million dollars worth of new equipment for 2008.

All of our Equipment Specialists are Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certified! In May, three of our Specialists gained new certifications or were re-certified.

- Special congratulations go to Bradford Ward for becoming re-certified in Engine Diagnostics with a score of 25 out of a possible 28, one of the highest scores obtained in the last round of testing!
- Larry Anderson reached the A6 Electrical/Electronic Systems Certification giving him a total of three and Douglas Hicks obtained his A7 Heating and Air Conditioning Certification for his second.
- The other two Equipment Specialists are John Ladner, Jr. with 2 ASE certifications and David Fairley who has his Master ASE Certification.

## PROJECTS

• The new DPW Warehouse building project is nearing completion. This \$644,000 project was funded by both FEMA and insurance monies and is scheduled to be completed before the end of August.

• The internal repairs to the DPW Main Facility are progressing well. We are getting ready to begin our final Phase II area work with a current completion date of August 30.

• DPW now has two of the six largest Utility Repair/Replacement Projects in the history of the City of Gulfport currently ongoing. They are part of the Hurricane Katrina damage repairs for the area between Hwy 90 and the R/R Tracks, primarily funded by FEMA. The two areas ongoing now are Hwy 90 and the R/R Tracks.

AREA 3B: 30th Ave to Debuys Rd., with an estimated project cost of \$ 25,724,806 and AREA 3A: between 30th Ave to 20th Ave., with an estimated project cost of \$ 8,188,804.

• We are performing Hurricane Katrina damage repairs to seven city water tower tanks. The Cross Roads Tank repairs have been completed and Bayou View and Loren D Heights are nearing completion.

• Current ongoing large Capital Projects:

11th Street and Beach Drive Drainage Project with an estimated project cost of \$977,000.

Ongoing Three Bridge Replacement Projects: Courthouse & Quincy Bridges (2) with an estimated project cost of \$312,000 and the Tara Hills Bridge with an estimated project cost of \$360,000.



## SPECIAL NOTICE FROM HARRY J. WHEELER



Interim Emergency Management Coordinator

If you have not already made plans, recent activity in the Gulf should remind you to remain prepared throughout hurricane season by keeping the necessary supplies handy and having an evacuation plan updated.

Additionally, don't forget the severe storms we occasionally get, so check your vehicles for your rain gear, blankets and water. And it's a good idea to always keep a small cooler in your vehicle.

We can monitor severe storms with our new emergency severe weather warning radio. If you have any questions, or need assistance with your emergency plan, please e-mail me at [hwheeler@ci.gulfport.ms.us](mailto:hwheeler@ci.gulfport.ms.us)

Stay informed with these resources:

The NOAA Extreme Weather Information Sheet 2008  
National Hurricane center website • [www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov)  
WLOX TV weather • [www.wlox.com](http://www.wlox.com)  
Weather Underground • [www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

## PLANNING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

On June 28, a "Building in the Special Flood Hazard Area" seminar was conducted by Bill Carrigee of Carrigee Consulting, LLC. It provided professional training and increased knowledge of elevation certificates and flood zone requirements. The seminar also offered the opportunity to earn an International Code Council Certificate and Continued Education Units. The following members of the Urban Development Department attended.

Attending were: Amber Soriano (Sign Code Enforcement Officer), Anita Petty (Planner II), Anthony Bishop (Code Enforcement Officer), Bill Racz (Building Inspector), Candace Payne (Floodplain Office Manager), Cecilia McCaffrey (Department Secretary), Don Galster (Building Inspector), Ernie Carpenter (Chief Building Inspector), Gary Anderson (Deputy Building Official), Gary Joffrion (Building Official), Greg Graves (Housing Quality Manager), Greg Holmes (Deputy Planning Administrator), Isaac Williams (Planner I), Jason Pryor (Code Enforcement Officer), Joanne Fayard (Permitting Manager), Jonathan Smith (Floodplain Official), Mark Collins (Code Enforcement Officer), Nahoma Webb (Code Enforcement Officer), Randy Brewer (Building Inspector), Ray Eaton (Planning Administrator), Rita Davis (Administrative Assistant II), Russell Beech (Building Inspector), Ted Molesworth (Sign Code Enforcement Officer), Thomas Lane (Planner I), Linda Otto (Planning Technician) and Harry Wheeler (Emergency Management)

The following employees passed professional exams testing their knowledge of International Residential Code and International Property Maintenance. Each attendee received an International Code Council Certificate. Congratulations to Randy Brewer, Building Inspector (Residential Building), Jason Pryor, Code Enforcement Officer (Property Maintenance & Housing Inspection) and Jeff Williams, Building Inspector (Property Maintenance)!



# POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS



*Officer James Griffin*

## APRIL 2008 OFFICER OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to James Griffin, January 2008's Officer of the Month, on being named Officer of the Month for April! This five-year veteran of the police department is currently assigned as a School Resource Officer at Gulfport High School. His actions & relentless follow-up led to a suspect being arrested on a drug charge. Already on probation for a murder charge, the suspect had his original life sentence reinstated. Said his supervisor, "It is undoubtedly Officer Griffin's dedication to duty and desire to provide a safe environment for children during his assignment as a school resource officer that led to a known criminal offender being removed from the streets."

## MAY 2008 OFFICER OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to Officer Greg Anderson on being named Officer of the Month! Officer Anderson is a five-year veteran of the Gulfport Police Department and currently serves in the Traffic Division. He has worked aggressively to take D.U.I. offenders off the streets and his 147 D.U.I. arrests placed him 3rd in the state. Officer Anderson has been recognized by the MS Office of Highway Safety and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M.A.D.D.).



*Officer Greg Anderson*

## IN MEMORIAM



*Allen Legere*

Allen Legere was a long-term icon at the Gulfport Police Department for many years and had the distinction to work under four Chiefs of Police. He retired after 12 years as the Administrative Secretary to Chief Alan Weatherford.

Allen had a life long history of serving his country and community in the United States Army for twenty-three years, including two tours in Vietnam.

It would be safe to say that there was not a single employee who did not know Allen and respect him to the highest degree. Your smile, spirit and goodwill will forever be a part of our memories.



*Explorer Sergeant  
Larry Stewart*

## EXPLORER OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Explorer Sergeant Larry Stewart, named 2007 Explorer of the Year by the Gulfport Rotary Club! Larry has shown constant dedication to the community and the program averaging 16 hours of community service each month. His community service activities include helping the elderly, fingerprinting and photographing children, feed the needy and removing graffiti around the city. Larry is a junior at Harrison Central High School, where he is competing for a scholarship to Ohio State University. According to his supervisor, "It is Larry's leadership skills that have set him apart the most. He is always given the most difficult assignments and there is never any doubt that they will be completed quickly, effectively and professionally."



*Sergeant Rick Fisher*

## OUTSTANDING OFFICER FOR 2008

Congratulations to Detective Sergeant Rick Fisher, American Legion Post 119's Outstanding Police Officer for 2008! He is a 14-year veteran of the Gulfport Police Department and currently serving as the Intelligence Analyst. Fisher played an instrumental part in making the Mobile Data Project a success. Now information is available with the click of a button for officers using laptop computers in their patrol units.



## FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

It looks like Gulfport is getting the message: No matter what your age, [Fire Extinguisher Training](#) is fun and can save lives & property! If any one is interested in a class or fire safety talk, please call the Gulfport Fire Department at 868-5950.



On June 13, Engine 2's [Lieutenant Gabe Dickens](#), [Engineer Terry Johnson](#) & [Firefighter Mike Hamers](#) filled a request from 19th Street Community Center to spray water for the summer camp kids.

Randy Johnson (pictured) and Richard Ritchie taught a very hands on fire extinguisher class to a summer camp group at Pass Road Elementary on June 16.



On July 2, Gulfport Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau Inspectors [Randy Johnson](#) and [Richard Ritchie](#) give a presentation to approximately 35 members of the Kiwanis Club at the United Methodist Church. Home and business fire safety, fire extinguishers and emergency planning were covered.



# PROMOTIONS, NEW HIRES & BIRTHDAYS

## WELCOME ABOARD NEW HIRES!

Drew Robinson	Patrol Officer
Samuel Acosta	Patrol Officer
Charles Allen	Patrol Officer
Lynn Hill	Benefits Administrator
Richard Ryan	Chief, Code Enforcement
Pamela Andrus	Purchasing Clerk III
Brittany Whitten	Admin II
Coleen Oatman	Asst. Budget Analyst
Rhonda Griffin	Call Center Customer Srv. Rep.
Kristi Riddle	Crime Scene Tech.

## CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PROMOTION!

Joshua Skaggs	Patrol Officer 2	Mickey Sheppard	Firefighter I
Don Ernst	Traffic Signal Tech II		



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

### AUGUST

- 1 Henry Levins, Larry David & Anthony Stewart
- 2 Elvin Stewart
- 3 Charlean King, John Alexander, Richard Hophan & Richard Perez
- 4 Bradley Walker
- 5 John Cunha
- 6 Steven Chamberlain
- 7 Brandon Dearman & John Pettway
- 8 Augustus Wesson, Tony Alves & Jarred Fore
- 10 Odell Thompson & Cassie Necaie
- 11 Paul Brown, Louis Palmer & Leslee Curry
- 12 Danny Meadors & Derek Angle
- 13 Margaret Wright & William Griebel
- 14 Brenda McKay & Peter Moran
- 15 Daniel Castillo & Lindsay Boggan
- 16 Sandra Wyche, Carl Gannon, William Fulks & Adam Dye
- 17 Rhonda Griffin & Max Igich
- 18 Lance Ransonet & Kini Gonsoulin
- 19 Doris Schultz, James Jenkins & William Collins
- 20 Christopher Henderson
- 21 Ronald Kirkland, Anthony Michael & Charles Hanson
- 22 Santino Castillo
- 23 Glen Hughes & Charles Koewers
- 24 Kathy Johnson, Gregory Lott & Devonte Harris
- 25 Lonnie Necaie
- 28 Joanne Fayard & Christina Thompson
- 30 Gerard Philbrick, Sharon Spiers & Jacob Burnett
- 31 Brian Stewart



### SEPTEMBER

- 1 Daryl Necaie
- 2 Kenneth Adams & Tera Hall
- 3 Andrew Capiola
- 4 Ryan Bennett
- 6 Duane Merrill & William Stover
- 7 Charlie Pope, Rodney Ladner & Bryan Yates
- 8 Rosario Ing, Walter Jenkins, Ella Holmes-Hines, Ian Barna, Kevin Beech & Isaac Williams
- 9 Nancy Chisholm & Merriman McCaleb
- 10 Belinda Head
- 11 Heather McCarty, Brian Deming & Julian-Carl Slaughter
- 12 Deana Norton, Adam Dedeaux & Bryan Watson
- 13 King Dunomes, James Clayton & Catherine Williams
- 14 Willie Smith, Angelia Pittman, Michael Shaw & Christopher Smith
- 15 Donna Ladner & Luis Garcia
- 16 Dale Wicks, William Atchison, Samantha Cotton-Taylor & James Johnson
- 17 Martha Carson, Kenneth Payne & Debra Williams
- 18 Jerry Cook
- 19 Thomas Regan & John Edwards
- 21 Howard Irgang & Christina Schultz
- 22 Steven Ramsey
- 23 Barbara Miller, Barry Oakes & Randall Slocum
- 24 Charles Scarbrough, Luke Davidson, Eric Dedeaux, Andrew Taylor & Sonny Bond
- 26 Robert Bunch
- 28 Betty Sutton
- 30 Kathy Hale